

Policy Adviser: Equality Challenge Unit

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) supports the higher education sector in its mission to realise the potential of all staff and students whatever their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age, to the benefit of those individuals, higher education institutions and society.

ECU was established in 2001 to promote equality for staff employed in the higher education sector. Its role was expanded in 2006 to cover equality and diversity issues in relation to students as well as staff.

The Unit is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Funding Council and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.

The Unit currently has 15 members of staff and is headed by David Ruebain, Chief Executive, and governed by a Board of Directors, whose Chair is Professor John Brooks, Vice-Chancellor at Manchester Metropolitan University.

For further details about ECU, please visit our website: www.ecu.ac.uk

Applications for this position will be assessed against the requirements for the post as set out in this job description.

ECU welcomes applications from all candidates irrespective of gender, disability, race, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, or age.

The ECU office is currently based at Queens House, 55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3LJ.

Job purpose and scope

General description of the post

This post will report to the Senior Policy Adviser with lead responsibility for stakeholder relations. The primary purpose of the post is to facilitate engagement with and provide a lead contact for Scottish higher education institutions and provide policy support to the Unit on initiatives in Scotland. The post will also contribute to other aspects of the Unit's activities, as outlined in ECU's current three-year strategy and the associated programme of projects.

The post will form part of the Unit's policy team, which currently comprises a Head of Policy, three Senior Policy Advisers and three Policy Advisers.

The Policy Adviser role will involve working on a range of projects, within teams, primarily focussing on Scotland but also working in relation to all four nations and the policy work of ECU generally.

Specific responsibilities

- = To act as the first point of contact for Scottish higher education institutions
- = To contribute to, and with guidance, lead specific projects and work in project teams pursuant to ECU's current three-year strategy, particularly relating to Scotland
- = To support the Senior Policy Adviser with lead responsibility for stakeholder relations and other staff in project work, drafting policy papers, briefing notes, guidance and presentations and with analysis of consultation responses and other documents
- = To undertake research and analysis into equality issues, and summarise findings in writing
- = To develop and maintain contacts with external organisations in line with ECU's stakeholder strategy
- = To respond effectively and swiftly to internal and external enquiries from colleagues, higher education institutions and other organisations as appropriate
- = To co-ordinate and assist with the management and organisation of meetings, seminars and other events, including project steering groups
- = To represent ECU, giving presentations and facilitating workshops, as appropriate
- = To assist in ensuring that the project, news and case law web pages associated with Scotland are up-to-date, including drafting copy as directed
- = To ensure the ECU team is briefed on specific issues relating to Scotland
- = To travel to Scotland and represent ECU at meetings as necessary

Other duties

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. Such duties may vary from time to time, without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and would not necessarily of themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post.

Person specification

Educational requirements

A first degree or equivalent evidence of analytical, communication and problem-solving ability.

Essential experience and attributes

Experience of working with equality and diversity issues, preferably within the higher education sector.

Good knowledge of the education system in Scotland, preferably higher education.

Good analytical and research skills with the ability to assess data and write detailed reports.

Excellent written and oral communications skills with the ability to interpret and explain policies and provide advice and assistance to a range of audiences.

Understanding of project management skills, with the ability to providing project support to several projects at once within set timeframes.

The ability to foster cooperative working and learning relationships with external partners.

Ability to work cooperatively in teams, and with different kinds of people, contributing to team decisions and maintaining team relationships by supporting others.

Ability to research on the Internet and make full use of e-mail, electronic diary management, databases and PowerPoint.

Desirable experiences and attributes

An up-to-date knowledge and understanding of Scottish equalities legislation and practice, and related issues.

Good knowledge of UK higher education.

Terms and conditions of employment

The successful candidate will be appointed within the salary band £25,351 to £31,435 per annum depending on qualifications and experience.

Normal hours of work are 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday. The Unit operates a flexitime scheme which accommodates variations around core hours for lunch breaks and start and finish times. It is sometimes necessary to work outside normal working hours.

The post holder must be prepared to travel to participate in conferences, workshops and external partnership meetings and to visit higher education institutions in any part of the UK. This will sometimes involve weekends or an overnight stay.

Basic holiday entitlement is five weeks (25 working days) per year. In addition, the office is closed for statutory public holidays and on six other days each year, including the days between Christmas and New Year. These days are paid in addition to the 25 days holiday entitlement.

There is a probationary period of six months during which the successful candidate will undergo a process of continuous assessment. The appointment will be confirmed once this period has been satisfactorily completed.

The post is superannuable including a personal contribution and an employer's contribution. The post holder will be eligible to join the USS Pension Scheme which is a final salary scheme.

Application and interview

The deadline for applications is **Monday 20 September 2010, 12 noon**.

Application forms should be returned to Victoria Lord, Office Manager, Equality Challenge Unit, 7th Floor, Queens House, 55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3LJ, or by email to admin@ecu.ac.uk

Interviews will be held in London on **Wednesday 29 September 2010**. We aim to notify candidates who have been shortlisted by **Thursday 23 September 2010**.